

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

AmFor Electronics

Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership

AmFor Electronics Succeeds with Lean and Growth Strategies

Client Profile:

AmFor Electronics develops, manufactures and markets automotive electrical test equipment, direct connection test leads, repair, adapter and custom wiring harnesses. The family-owned business employs 35 people at its facility in Portland, Oregon.

Situation:

AmFor Electronics management team was familiar with the Toyota Production System and Lean Manufacturing and decided that they needed to implement some of these concepts in their operation. The company contacted the Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership (OMEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate. When OMEP did the initial assessment, it became very apparent that AMFor Electronics needed help with top line growth and they needed it fast: new customers, new markets, and a new marketing message.

Solution:

OMEP consultant Ken Milosevich contacted Kevin Johnson, Sr. Project/Program Coordinator, at the Portland Development Commission, and secured funding for a marketing/sales improvement initiative. With OMEP in the project lead, Peter Arezzini, president of Arezzini Associates, was subcontracted to work with AmFor's management team to develop a marketing strategy for top line growth. At the time that AmFor began their strategic work with Arezzini, the company had been doing business as NW Regulator Supply and had several business identities that were diluting their market focus. Within a few weeks, they cemented their business identity as AmFor Electronics, upgraded their corporate image, moved their entire operations to a new facility that was more conducive to product flow, acquired the assets, along with a couple of large customers, from a smaller competitor, and reorganized the company to be more focused on specific market segments.

With further help from OMEP, AmFor Electronics received a Governor's Workforce Training Grant for employee training and Lean implementation. Milosevich provided Principles of Lean and 5S training to all company employees. One specific improvement was the placement of all their crimping machines onto rolling carts instead of having them lined up on fixed bench tops. This gave employees the flexibility to move the machines around and create custom manufacturing cells dependent on their customer orders. They also combined their two electrical test assembly stations into one assembly cell, reducing square footage required by more than 50 percent.

Results:

- * Increased sales by 33 percent.
- * Increased on-time delivery by 100 percent.
- * Created 13 new jobs.

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* Achieved a more competitive and profitable position.

Testimonial:

"Pressure caused by offshore competition was challenging our strong desire to retain manufacturing jobs. With OMEP's guidance and help from strategic economic development partners, we were able to focus on change management, strategic planning and the transition to Lean Enterprise. The results have been tangible and visible with clear strategic and financial benefits."

Bill Marthaller, General Manager